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Cruz was probable, for I knew of no other river in these parts;—we had passed Corey Inlet and the Gallegos. The rest of the story I could only *try* to credit. I tried to urge them on, but they were not to be hurried. Some of them grumbled that I had no intention of giving them anything, but meant to slip from them the first opportunity. No wonder they thought so; they certainly had not laid me under very great obligations of gratitude. What on earth they wanted of me, unless to fat and eat me, was past conjecture; and my fare had not been of a nature to induce corpulence, so that this supposition was not trustworthy. They *said* they wanted me to help steal horses. They were bound for the Rio Negro, where they meant to steal seven hundred horses, of which number I was to get two. Certainly, I told them, it would be just the thing; and that was a most excellent reason for going to "Holland." They would find me a rare thief; but, however it might be with them, *I* could not steal without a good stock of rum and tobacco. Was I insincere in all this? The reader may smile or may frown, but it was my purpose, if I failed to escape by way of "Holland," to humor them to the top of their bent; to ride, hunt, and even *steal* my way into their confidence;—any way to insure present safety, and keep an eye open for future opportunities.

Three or four days were passed in suspense, which was at last terminated by taking our line of march down the river. We halted at noon, at a point where he banks sloped gently to the water's edge, on either side of the deep and narrow channel. Active preparations were here commenced for crossing. Part of the horses were driven across the river, whilst a portion of the tribe were occupied

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in building boats to ferry their families and goods across. Their boats are constructed after a simple fashion. A quantity of bushes are cut and dragged down to the margin of the water. They take four tent-stakes, and lay them so as to enclose an area eight feet square, lashing them firmly together at the four corners. Four Indians then raise the stakes from the ground, while others place the skin covering of the tent over the frame, allowing it to sag down three or four feet. The edges of the skin are brought over the stakes, and fastened on the inside. The bushes, made ready for the purpose, are placed within, tops downward, round the entire circumference, and secured to the stakes, till the boat is completely timbered up. The bushes keep the skin distended, and give to the vessel an oval shape, so that, though square at the top, it bears a striking resemblance to a large iron pot. Its length and its breadth of beam are of course equal. When completed, it is firmly lashed from stem to sternpost, and from side to side, with a lariat, or green hide rope, forty feet long, to keep it from spreading or racking. I had no hand in modelling this witch of the wave, but, like an apprentice, did as I was ordered in forwarding the structure, and, when nothing else was required, "held on to the slack." It was at last completed, like the temple of Solomon, without the sound of axe or hammer; neither bolts, trenails nor caulking-iron, were required. We carried the barge down, and launched her in the stream. Two paddles were made by lashing two bladebones of the guanaco to sticks. Squaws, pappooses and baggage, were stowed away, till the boat was laden to the water's edge. I was directed to take passage with the family and household effects of the chief, and seated myself